BJA NTTAC TTA System: Standards of Practice

Purpose

The Bureau of Justice Assistance (BJA) National Training and Technical Assistance Center (NTTAC) launched the BJA Training and Technical Assistance (TTA) Collaboration Portal and BJA TTA Reporting Portal (collectively the TTA system) in 2014 to facilitate more robust reporting on the BJA-funded TTA activities and to promote information sharing and collaboration across BJA and its TTA providers. The TTA Collaboration Portal offers a variety of capabilities, making it easier for BJA providers to work together to provide TTA services, prevent the duplication of efforts, and consolidate available TTA information in order to identify trends and coordinate successful approaches to challenges. The TTA Reporting Portal enhances the way BJA and its TTA providers capture, track, and report on TTA activities, allowing for standardized and robust reporting and analysis capabilities.

BJA NTTAC, BJA TTA providers, and BJA staff need to work together for the TTA system to be effective and relevant. BJA NTTAC develops training resources for the system that reflect the tasks outlined in the BJA NTTAC Statement of Work. This document outlines standards of practice for how users should support and use the system.

BJA NTTAC

System Functionality

BJA NTTAC is responsible for maintaining the TTA system and undertakes numerous activities with the goal of keeping the system fully operational for users. This includes following a regular release schedule to deploy bug fixes and perform general maintenance on the system.[1] BJA NTTAC reviews and prioritizes system issues with BJA before assigning them to a release.

BJA NTTAC imports award information from GMS at least quarterly in order to keep award information in the system reasonably up to date. Beginning in October 2020, BJA NTTAC recognizes that JustGrants will be the system of record and will plan to use an API to import award information.

User Support

BJA NTTAC is committed to helping BJA staff and TTA providers efficiently use the TTA system. BJA NTTAC conducts regularly scheduled training, maintains online tutorials and written

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[1] This document reflects the tasks and expectations outlined in the BJA NTTAC Option Year 4 Statement of Work

resources (e.g., user guides and frequently asked questions) on the BJA NTTAC website, and responds to user's questions. BJA NTTAC develops guidance for efficient use of the system, and updates guidance, resources, and training as appropriate to reflect updates to the TTA system.[2]

Serving as the TTA system's help desk, BJA NTTAC maintains a "Concierge Team" who track and respond to inquiries about the TTA system submitted via the BJA NTTAC email account and phone. Concierge Team members provide an initial response to inquiries within a reasonable amount of time.[3] BJA NTTAC also provides more in-depth coaching to users, including facilitating meetings between TTA providers and BJA staff to address complex questions.

Data Integrity

BJA leadership asks BJA NTTAC to provide information about TTA activities across BJA's TTA providers. BJA NTTAC uses data from the TTA Reporting Portal to provide this data and analysis. In order to provide reasonably accurate data and analysis, BJA NTTAC (and other users) must be confident that the data in the TTA Reporting Portal is updated, thorough, and accurate, and is aligned with BJA NTTAC's data entry guidance.

Therefore, BJA NTTAC conducts routine reviews of the data in the TTA Reporting Portal. BJA NTTAC reviews items such as:

- Usage of the TTA Reporting Portal (e.g., users at provider organizations, frequency of use).
- Data on awards, TTAs, and deliverables (e.g., reasonableness and alignment with guidance).
- Performance metric data (e.g., complete, reasonable, and accurate)

BJA NTTAC may share information about the findings of data reviews with BJA staff and/or TTA providers. While these routine reviews are not formal audits, they may result in instances where BJA NTTAC reaches to individual TTA providers to verify or validate specific data entries, or to update information based on BJA NTTAC's clarification and guidance. BJA NTTAC will work closely with TTA providers to give additional guidance, lessons learned, or tips to resolve instances that require adjustments or modifications.

Feedback from Users

BJA NTTAC welcomes feedback and suggestions from users on improving TTA system functionality and usability. BJA NTTAC will track feedback and suggestions and consider user feedback and suggestions (among other factors) when planning system enhancements. BJA NTTAC will also work with BJA staff to address any feedback about the system that they receive from TTA providers. As there are many elements to consider regarding system enhancements, BJA NTTAC may not be able to accommodate every suggestion received.

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[2] This document reflects the tasks and expectations outlined in the BJA NTTAC Option Year 4 Statement of Work
[3] Team members monitor the email account and phone during standard business hours and aim to respond to most inquiries within a business day

BJA TTA Providers

Data Entry

BJA TTA providers are responsible for entering data into the TTA Reporting Portal about TTA and deliverable activities supported under TTA awards. Data entry should be as accurate as possible given the information available to the provider. TTA providers are encouraged to contact BJA NTTAC with any questions at any time.

TTA providers should enter TTA and deliverable data in an ongoing manner throughout the course of their award period, as new or updated information becomes available. TTA and deliverable activities should be entered in the system when the provider commits to working on the activity, which allows BJA to have a near-real-time view of the TTA and deliverable activities that are completed, planned, or active. Providers should indicate that a TTA or deliverable activity is completed and enter performance metrics within 30 days of finishing work on the TTA or deliverable activity. While most award data is imported into the system, TTA providers are strongly encouraged to enter information about objectives, target audience, and impacts associated with their awards.

TTA providers are also encouraged to enter information into their Provider Profile, accessible via the TTA Collaboration Portal. BJA may use Provider Profile information to find providers with relevant expertise to respond to a request for TTA or other information.

BJA NTTAC or BJA staff may contact TTA providers with request to add or update information in the TTA system. BJA NTTAC requests that TTA providers respond to those requests in order to keep information in the system as up to date, complete, and accurate as possible.

User Registration

TTA providers should identify staff members from their organization to enter information into the TTA Reporting Portal and ensure that the appropriate staff members register for access to the TTA Reporting Portal and appropriate awards. Providers users should follow the steps of the registration process as outlined in the TTA Reporting Portal User Guide. TTA providers users should attend training sessions and review resources that BJA NTTAC offers to build their understanding of system features and data entry guidance. BJA providers should develop their organizational processes to support the ongoing entry of TTA data into the systems that is aligned with data entry guidance, to the best of their ability.

Required Reporting

BJA providers are required to submit semiannual reports on their TTA activity (supported by their BJA TTA awards) into JustGrants. Through July 2020, providers produced reports on their TTA activity using the *GMS Report* link in the TTA Reporting Portal, as outlined in the TTA Reporting Portal User Guide. Following the launch of JustGrants in October 2020, it is anticipated that providers will submit their semiannual reports into JustGrants (additional guidance will be forthcoming). The TTA Reporting Portal will generate the semiannual reports based on award, TTA, and deliverable data in the system. BJA providers should ensure that TTA activities for the relevant reporting period, including performance metrics for activities completed during the reporting period, have been entered into the TTA Reporting Portal so that these activities may be appropriately displayed in the semiannual report.

Request for Assistance and Feedback

BJA TTA provider users who need assistance with technical errors, the user registration progress, data entry guidance, or other issues should contact the BJA NTTAC Concierge Team at **bjanttac@usdoj.gov** or 1-833-872-5174 with questions.

TTA provider users are encouraged to share feedback with BJA NTTAC about the TTA system. BJA NTTAC tracks and considers feedback from users in order to make the system more efficient and relevant. TTA providers can also speak with BJA staff about the system, and BJA NTTAC will coordinate with BJA staff to address any feedback from TTA providers.

TTA providers users are also strongly encouraged to be aware of and review the many resources BJA NTTAC offers, including regularly scheduled trainings, online tutorials, and written resources (e.g., user guides and frequently asked questions). TTA provider users are invited to submit ideas for new resources that would support their use of the TTA system.

BJA Staff

TTA System Familiarity

BJA staff should be familiar with TTA system features so that they can navigate and use the system for data analysis, grant management, and other activities. BJA staff should also be aware of resources and data entry guidance for their providers so that staff can support providers in their use of the TTA system. Staff should encourage providers to contact the BJA NTTAC Concierge Team to address technical questions or questions for which the BJA staff members is unsure of the answer.

Information Review

BJA staff should review information in the TTA Reporting Portal for awards they manage. Staff should review award information displayed in the *Edit Award* page, including information in fields shaded gray, which was pulled from GMS previously and will be pulled from JustGrants beginning in October 2020. If staff notices errors, anomalies, or questionable data with information pulled from JustGrants (following its launch in October 2020), they should contact the JustGrants Help Desk.[4] Staff should update Policy Advisor data on the *Edit Award* page when awards are assigned to a new Policy Advisor.

Staff should review objective, TTA, and deliverable entries periodically throughout the award period and should review the semiannual reports providers submit as part of the standard semiannual progress report. If BJA staff believes information is incomplete, outdated, or inaccurate, staff should reach out to the TTA provider to discuss any questions and may request that the providers add or update information in the system as appropriate.

Data Access

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[4] Staff should consider that the TTA Reporting Portal pulls information from JustGrants at least quarterly and may not reflect recent changes to award information.

We understand that BJA staff respond to numerous data calls about TTA and deliverable activities. During the development of the TTA Reporting Portal, BJA NTTAC considered many of these data calls and worked to capture relevant data in the TTA Reporting Portal. The TTA Reporting Portal is a valuable tool for responding to data calls and can minimize the burden on BJA staff and TTA providers to collect and submit data with quick turnaround times.

BJA staff are encouraged to become familiar with the data collected by the TTA Reporting Portal and to leverage this resource to respond to data calls. BJA staff may reach to BJA NTTAC for assistance in identifying relevant data fields and retrieving data from the system in order to respond to data requests. BJA NTTAC recognizes that there may be times when a data call requires information not collected by the TTA Reporting Portal. In such instances, BJA staff will need to reach to TTA providers for that information. A preliminary check of TTA Reporting Portal data can likely give BJA staff the information needed to respond to many data calls.

Provider Communication

BJA NTTAC may request assistance from BJA staff in communicating with BJA providers about the TTA system. BJA NTTAC requests that BJA staff respond to those requests for support and work with BJA NTTAC to address any issues.

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BJA staff are also encouraged to provide feedback to BJA NTTAC about the TTA system. BJA NTTAC tracks and considers feedback from users in order to make the system more efficient and relevant.

BJA staff are also strongly encouraged to be aware of and review the many resources that BJA NTTAC offers, including regularly scheduled trainings, online tutorials, and written resources (e.g., user guides and frequently asked questions). BJA staff are invited to submit ideas for new resources that would support their use of the TTA system.

Please contact the BJA NTTAC Team at bjanttac@usdoj.gov or 1-833-872-5174 for assistance or to ask questions about the BJA TTARP.